



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; South Pacific Tuna Act

AGENCY: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

DATES: To ensure consideration, written or on-line comments must be submitted on or before (insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER).

ADDRESSES: Direct all written comments to Adrienne Thomas, PRA Officer, NOAA, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 159, Asheville, NC 28801 (or via the Internet at PRAComments@doc.gov). All comments received are part of the public record. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to Rini Ghosh, (808) 725-5033 or rini.ghosh@noaa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Abstract

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) collects vessel license, vessel registration, catch, and unloading information from operators of U.S. purse seine vessels fishing under the provisions of the Treaty on Fisheries between the Governments of Certain Pacific Island States and the Government of the United States of America (Treaty). The Treaty provides access for U.S. purse seine vessels to fish in the exclusive economic zones (EEZs) of Pacific Island Parties to the Treaty (PIPs). The PIPs include Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. This collection of information is required to meet U.S. obligations under the Treaty.

The South Pacific Tuna Act of 1988 (16 U.S.C. 973-973r) and U.S. implementing regulations (50 CFR Part 300, Subpart D) authorize the collection of information from U.S. purse seine vessels fishing in the EEZs of PIPs under the Treaty. Vessel operators must submit annual vessel license and registration (including registration of vessel monitoring system (VMS) units) applications and periodic written reports of catch and unloading of fish from licensed vessels. They are also required to ensure the continued operation of VMS units on board licensed vessels, which is expected to require periodic maintenance of the units. The information collected is submitted to the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) through the U.S. government, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The license and registration application information is used by the FFA to determine the operational capability and financial responsibility of a vessel operator interested in fishing under the Treaty. Information obtained from vessel catch and unloading reports is used by the FFA to assess fishing effort and fishery

resources in the region and to track the amount of fish caught within each PIP's EEZ.

Maintenance of VMS units is needed to ensure the continuous operation of the VMS units, which, as part of the VMS administered by the FFA, are used as an enforcement tool. If the information is not collected, the U.S. government will not meet its obligations under the Treaty, and the lack of fishing information will result in poor management of the fishery resources.

II. Method of Collection

All information are to be submitted in hard copy via mail or through electronic reporting.

III. Data

OMB Control Number: 0648-0218.

Form Number(s): None.

Type of Review: Regular submission extension of a current information collection.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 41.

Estimated Time Per Response: License application, 15 minutes; VMS registration application, 45 minutes; catch report, 1 hour; and unloading logsheet, 30 minutes.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 402.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$153,081 in recordkeeping/reporting costs.

IV. Request for Comments

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including

hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

Sheleen Dumas,

Departmental Lead PRA Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.

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